

THE RIGHT MOVES

Experienced renovators Varinia and Paul Joyce had their work cut out to turn this unloved Victorian property into a warm and inviting home

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH | STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR



KITCHEN

'The change in flooring marks the divide between the new and original part of the house,' explains Varinia.

Try Taj Grey limestone tiles, £39.38sq m, Stone Superstore. Natural Solutions Classique Oak Rustic flooring, £58.99sq m, World of Flooring



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Detached Victorian house
LOCATION Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire
ROOMS Hallway, sitting room, kitchen-diner/living area, utility room, office, four bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom
PURCHASED 2013
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'A two-bedroom Victorian terrace near here,' says Varinia.



HALLWAY

A tartan carpet and patterned lampshade add interest to the neutral scheme. Braebum carpet in Myrtle, £70m, Ulster Carpets. Fryetts Bergan Scandi lampshade is similar, £24.99, KuShade at Etsy



DINING AREA

The hard-wearing zinc-topped table and metal chair bring an industrial feel to the open-plan space. Recreate the look with the Hampton zinc table, £750, Cox & Cox. Tolix chair, £266, Made In Design

Varinia Joyce admits that she's a 'serial renovator', having moved 10 times in the last 30 years with her husband, Paul. So when a neglected Victorian property near their previous home caught her eye while she was walking past it one afternoon, she couldn't resist stopping to take a look. 'Paul and I were aware the house had gone unsold at auction and was empty, so we had a peek through the windows and at the garden,' she says. 'We'd never taken on a project of this scale before and liked the idea of starting from scratch.'

The couple, who run a vehicle re-marketing business, offered the full asking price without stepping inside, but the estate agent insisted they view the property first. Duly they did – and remained unfazed by the poky layout, lack of heating and absence of a working kitchen. 'The whole place had a nice feel to it,' Varinia continues. 'There was also an opportunity to create a large open-plan layout, with a kitchen and relaxed dining and living area.'

Varinia sketched out their ambitious ideas so an architect could draw up plans. As well as extending onto the footprint of the rear coal shed and converting the garage, the couple planned to extend to the side and relocate the front door and staircase. 'We wanted the rooms to be as big as possible, and the kitchen was the most important space,' she explains. 'I had my heart set on a DeVol kitchen and chose The

SITTING ROOM

Tactile textures, vibrant cushions and lush greenery fill the space with personality. The antique cupboard (right) was intended for the couple's bedroom but proved to be too heavy to carry upstairs.

Mitford Lounger sofa, £3,100, John Sankey. Source a cowhide rug, £269, from Hide Rugs. Try Bullfinch cushion, from £24.99, Perkins & Morley



EN SUITE

A granite offcut from a local shop contributes to the luxurious look in the couple's bathroom. Granite, £850, Alpha Quartz. Handmade vanity unit painted in Purbeck Stone estate eggshell, £62 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

MASTER BEDROOM

'I bought the Balinese doors on a whim at auction,' says Varinia. 'They're too small to fit a wardrobe so they're displayed on a stud wall, behind which is our walk-in wardrobe.' The Koi Carp cushion is a good match, £55, Amara



Real Shaker in a creamy grey, with a darker grey tone on the island unit. The colour scheme for the whole house unfolded from there – even for the front door.

A visit to the Artist Residence, a boutique hotel in Brighton, turned out to be an unexpected source of inspiration when the couple spotted a vintage garage door in the reception that was fitted on runners. 'We thought it looked great, but our builders thought we were bonkers when we asked them to do the same with our old garage doors!' says Varinia.

The reclaimed sliding doors are now in the kitchen and sitting room, while a salvaged door from the old potting shed leads into the utility room. A beam from the demolished pantry was sliced in half and upcycled by their joiner, Joe Thompson from JT Joinery. 'He glued one piece of the oak above the new kitchen window and another above the patio doors to look like original wood lintels,' explains Varinia. 'It's very effective.' This juxtaposition of old and new is evident throughout: a contemporary woodburner takes pride of place in the sitting room, and a pair of antique Balinese doors make a striking wall feature in the master suite. Such treasures have come from auctions, exotic holidays and local artisans.

Although the couple enjoy living in their newly refurbished house, the self-confessed serial renovator can't resist keeping an eye out for her next project. 'I would love to refurbish a Victorian farmhouse,' Varinia admits. 25

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